

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 24 March 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Annual Report 2018/19

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cllr Eleanor Stringer

Contact officer: Joanna Georgiades

Recommendations:

- A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides members of the panel with an overview of performance of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board for the year 2018-9 as contained within the annual report.
- 1.2 The (MSCB) is set up under the Children Act 2004 and has the following main objectives:
- To coordinate what is done by each agency represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Merton; and
 - To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by those agencies for that purpose.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The report, contained as Appendix 1, presents an annual update on what is going well, the key challenges and the actions that we will take to address these challenges.
- 2.2. The vision of the MSCB is that the Board works to ensure that *Everyone in Merton Council does Everything they can to ensure that Every Child is Safe, Supported and Successful*. This annual report is an evaluation of our progress towards achieving this aim as well as an assessment of the overall impact of the Board especially with regard to our key priorities.
- 2.3. This report presents activity and performance data from 2018/19 around the identified priorities of:

- **Managing the arrangements for the transition from MSCB to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership.**
- **Think Family** – to support children and adults in our most vulnerable families to reduce risk and ensure improved outcomes.
- **Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents** – adolescence is a time of significant change for all young people.
- **Early Help** – To develop an early help system that is responsive and effectively prevents escalation of concerns.

2.4. Underpinning these four priorities for the MSCB is the crosscutting theme of **Neglect.**

2.5. The annual report recognises that the partnership has continued to drive improvement in practice through the delivery of the MSCB Business Plan 2018/19, whilst overseeing the development of new partnership arrangements for safeguarding children and young people in Merton.

2.6. Partners have worked together to agree an approach that places children, young people and families at the centre of safeguarding.

2.7. A mature relationship of respectful challenge between agencies continues to drive improvement in quality of services, and the lived experience of service users.

2.8. Key achievements of the MSCB include:

- Joint working with *Safer Merton* to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach in response to domestic abuse in Merton.
- The approval of a Parental Mental Health Protocol, recognising the impact of parental vulnerability on children and young people and the need for effective support.
- The pilot of a neglect identification and assessment tool to support professionals identify and assess children at risk of, or experiencing, neglect. The screening tool was well received and will be rolled out within the 2019-20 business plan.

2.9. The MSCB has also continued to build on achievements from the previous year in the support of vulnerable adolescents with a Multi-agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation Protocol to embed a robust approach to the identification and response to children, young people and families affected by exploitation.

3 CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

4 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

5 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. For the period of the annual report: Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals

(other than the local authority) that should be represented. The statutory objectives and functions of the LSCB Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 are:

(a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and

(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

5.2. It is the statutory responsibility of the Independent Chair of the MSCB to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should also be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the health and well-being board.

5.3. The report should provide;

- A rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services
- Identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action.
- Include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period
- Information on the outcome of assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual
- An analysis of how the LSCB partners have used their data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse.
- Appropriate data on children missing from care, and how the LSCB is addressing the issue.
- Contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and details of what the LSCB has spent

6 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

9 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

9.1 Appendix 1: Annual report of Merton Safeguarding Children Board 2018/19.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None